

fascinated by it. In this respect it is like his other obsession with perversion. The point is mainly important in so far as when he writes **du cote de Guermantes'*, he gives us a certain feeling of falsity in his position—of hospitality exploited for literary copy; a blemish which is absent from those other sections of his work that deal with Swann's love or his own childhood by the Vivonne.

For the essential fascination of this book seems to me to lie, not so much in its story, any more than in its philosophy, but in its spiritual autobiography, its intuitions flashed like X-rays on men and things, stripping them to the bare skeleton, and yet keeping in its blue flicker a sinister beauty that might belong to some necromancer of legend rather than to a modern scientific observer. *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* is, above all, the recollections of a poet—another *Memoires d'Outre-Tombe*, even better deserving of the name, by one who is the literary descendant of that devoted pair, the La Rochefoucauld of the *Maximes* and the Madame de la Fayette who laid bare the Juart of the Princesse de Cleves.

In Proust, indeed, France has added one more to her numerous *penseurs*, not to her few philosophers. He has the quick perception of a woman, not the organising logic of the builders of systems. It is the La Rochefoucauld in him that loves observations such as these:

'Dans une separation, c'est celui qui n'aime
pas d'amour
qui dit les choses tendres, l'amour ne
s'exprimant pas
directement.⁵

'Les mille bontes de Tamour peuvent finir
par eveiller,
chez Tetre qui Tinspire en ne Teprouvant
pas, une affec-
tion, une reconnaissance moins egoistes que
le sentiment
qui les a provoquées et qui peut-être, après
des années de
la separation, quand il ne restera rien de lui
chez Tancien
amant, subsisteront toujours chez Taimee/